cumference, twisted them with his fingers till he had a small 286
nucleus of double thread. With a wooden peg he fastened this tiny ball so that it could not unroll, and started swinging it round his head, letting it touch the ground now and again to increase the spin. It travelled in wider and wider circles till the connecting thread became of unmanageable length and began to kink. Then he hauled it in and wound the beautifully twisted length of doubled thread on to the little ball and again pegged it down. Thus he continued till the original ball was exhausted.

Not long after, the Ustád's Hérul Nisa came to say that they were setting up a goats'-hair loom at their house if we would care to see it. We found that this time a large vertical frame standing on the roof of No. 8, lashed to the rafter of the balcony, and in course of being strung with just such a warp thread as Kalbi had shown us in the making. While Hunza sheep [233]
are uniformly white, three kinds of goat are kept: white, brown, and black. Black hair is used for the warp, while the bobbins are wound with white and brown. The bobbins in this case are long, needle-like rods the full width of the cloth, 2 feet or so, with the hair wound round notches in each end. There are only two heddles, thrown backwards and forwards by a forked peg like a boy's catapult. Goats'-hair weaving is a slower job and heavier than wool-weaving, but the Ustád is master of it, too, and was again initiating two younger men. The different coloured hair allows of pattern-weaving, and they enjoy devising new stripes and squares of brown and white. A very heavy comb is needed to beat down the intractable material, and in order to prevent the cloth being drawn too tight by the cross threads, two "bows" of flexible wood were spiked across it to keep it flat and taut. These are inserted as near as possible to the working edge and moved up 352
as work progresses. The goats'-hair strips are used as rugs, or 415
doubled and sewn together to form sacks and saddle-bags.

One day we were exploring the half-ruined village of the 346
old fort, threading the narrow switchback alleys between 345
deserted houses—so narrow that in places you could only edge along sideways—looking for points of vantage from which to

take photographs of the picturesque, abandoned Shiah mosque. It has been superseded by the New Assembly Hall in cut granite with pointed roof—an amazing achievement for local architects and masons, and one of which they are justly proud, but a dreadful eyesore in these surroundings and as uninspiring to an artistic eye as a Methodist chapel in a London suburb. Unfortunately it jostles the picturesque old mosque (whose entrance flight of steps is a delightful notched tree-trunk and whose flat roof bristles with a parapet of ibex horns), so that you can only see the older building squint-eye up or down a 3-foot lane. We pushed on and found ourselves emerging on a bluff covered with handsome graves. The Hunzukuts are too necessarily frugal to bury their dead on any ground that can be cultivated, so their graves usually stand on some barren hump that rises above the reach of irrigation water. Ordinary graves are just covered by flat slabs of concrete-like beaten earth, but more important folk have picturesque erections of varied shape to mark their last resting place. In theory all should no doubt be oriented in relation to Mecca, but in fact the graves face in whichever direction the site makes most convenient. We skirted round God's acre, re-entering the unappetizing labyrinth of desolate lanes, and presently came on a debris-strewn patch of ground whose houses had been dismantled (probably for their timber), and had fallen in. Here old Ferrájo had made a lathe-pit outside a rather handsome wooden door with a carved lintel. This had once led to his family's "town house," but now they lived out in Jamu, a suburb, as it were, of Aliábád. In its day, the warren of buildings to which he proudly pointed had boasted fifty-two "smokes." (A smoke represents a hearth-fire, and a hearth represents a household. In enquiring of a hamlet how many families it shelters, the correct phrase is: "How many smokes have you here?")

We begged Ferrájo to let us see him at work. He had, however, no wood in hand at the moment; chunks of root or cross-sections of willow trunks are the raw material of his bowls. But he let us inspect his pit—very similar in size and shape to a loom-pit—with the treadles and a leather belt passing three